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LETTER DATED 10 JULY 1995 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LEBANON TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of Lebanon has decided to request the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which expires on 31 July 1995, for a further interim period of six months, on the basis of the provisions of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 501 (1982), 508 (1982), 509 (1982) and all other relevant resolutions and decisions of the Council.

My Government is pleased to report that the national reconstruction and rehabilitation process is proceeding. The construction of the new commercial centre in downtown Beirut is under way. The return of displaced persons is taking place. The national infrastructure is being modernized. Priority is being given to basic services such as telecommunications, electricity, transportation, schools, hospitals and waterworks.

My Government is also pleased to report that the command of UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities continue to coordinate in perfect harmony with the goal of deploying the Lebanese Army throughout the southern part of the country up to its internationally recognized boundaries.

Despite the satisfactory economic performance and the progress and acceleration of reconstruction, Israel's continuous occupation of South Lebanon and its continued aggression against Lebanon and its citizens remain the major obstacle to comprehensive national recovery. The Israeli Army continues to shell villages and towns in Lebanon. Aerial bombardments have taken place in 1995, killing and injuring many civilians and destroying property, in repeated violation of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It is most regrettable that Israel, despite its participation in the ongoing Middle East peace process launched at Madrid in October 1991, continues its unabated attacks on Lebanon by land, sea and air. Furthermore, for the past five months, Israel has blockaded the southern coastline of Lebanon, extending north up to the town of Saida, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, Security Council resolutions and

international law. This blockade constitutes a major economic and social problem, especially for the fishermen in the South who are prevented from pursuing their livelihood.

Furthermore, Israel still refuses to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit the hundreds of innocent Lebanese detainees held for years in the notorious camps of Al-Khiam and Marjayoun in South Lebanon, and manned by the Israelis in violation of the Geneva Convention. Many of the detainees are suffering from serious diseases as a result of harsh living conditions, subjection to ill-treatment and denial of medical care. Others have died in the camps or shortly after being released. The detainees have been subjected to physical and mental torture in further violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Lebanon remains wholly committed to the Middle East peace process in order to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). Lebanon agreed to participate in the Madrid Peace Conference and subsequent rounds of negotiations in Washington on the basis of resolution 425 (1978), as was confirmed by the letter of assurances dated 18 October 1991 from the Government of the United States of America, as co-sponsor of the Conference, to the Government of Lebanon. It was Lebanon's clear understanding that the Middle East peace process would provide the framework within which Israel would implement resolution 425 (1978).

In view of Israel's continued aggressions against Lebanon and their threat to the peace process, it must be underscored that the implementation of resolution 425 (1978) remains the only way to stop the violence in southern Lebanon. Towards this end, the Council could play a positive role in securing peace for the region by demonstrating the inviolability of its resolutions and undertaking long overdue measures to implement resolution 425 (1978). This would enable the Government of Lebanon to re-establish law and order throughout the entire south of the country by extending its authority up to its internationally recognized boundaries.

The Government of Lebanon considers that the operational strength and capacity of UNIFIL should be maintained, with a view to implementing resolution 425 (1978) in full. In this context, UNIFIL represents the international community's commitment to Lebanon and to the restoration of its full sovereignty and territorial integrity. Its support and humanitarian assistance are vital to the civilian population, but cannot be a substitute for the fulfilment of its original mandate as stipulated in resolution 425 (1978). UNIFIL's role as an interim force is to ensure the withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Lebanon and to assist the Government of Lebanon in re-establishing its legitimate and effective authority in the area, through its army and internal security forces.

The Government of Lebanon avails itself of this opportunity to pay tribute to the UNIFIL command, administrators, troops and troop-contributing countries for their noble efforts and sacrifices made in the cause of peace. It expresses deep appreciation to the Secretary-General and his assistants for their tireless

efforts, which contribute to the valuable presence of UNIFIL in southern Lebanon.

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Samir MOUBARAK
Ambassador
Permanent Representative